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10 August 1967

MEMORANDUM FOR THE DIRECTOR

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SUBJECT: Bunker's 15th Weekly (Saigon 2686, 9 August 1967)

1. Despite the fact that it was a lively week, this is not one of Bunker's better efforts and is a document you can skip without loss.
2. Bunker opens with a six-paragraph over-view touching on campaign activities and the Quang Tri incident (where the civilian candidates went to the wrong airfield), faulting the American press for its reporters' hyper-critical attitude and taking particular exception to their continued carping at ARVN.
3. In a 17-paragraph political section (paragraphs 7 through 23) Bunker goes over the Quang Tri incident in some detail, rendering the judgment (with which we concur) that it was an unintentional snafu and not deliberate harassment. He then talks about the various candidates' treatment of the peace and negotiation issue, the corruption issue, and the whole issue of election conduct on the part of both government and non-government candidates. He notes that the American presence has not yet loomed large in the campaign. Five paragraphs (19 through 22) discuss the Thieu/Ky campaign organization and its problems, and the front that Ky's supporters are trying to put together. Most of these paragraphs draw on Station reporting, identified as such. He then briefly talks about the arrest of five journalists for pro-VC activities, noting that the case against them seems solid but he is concerned about possible political repercussions.
4. Bunker's four-paragraph military section (24-27) is a defense of ARVN, presented by citing specific instances where ARVN units have performed well in recent engagements. Bunker is right in arguing that ARVN is maligned but doesn't really address the criticisms that can be levied against the GVN military establishment, despite the good performance of some individual units.

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25X1

5. The cable closes by recounting current economic, Chieu Hoi and casualty statistics. This years' Chieu Hoi total to date (20,009) is almost as high as the over-all total for all of 1966 (20,242).

George A. Carver, Jr.
Special Assistant for Vietnamese Affairs

Attachment
Saigon 2686

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